



# NUTRITION DIALOGUE GUIDE CARDS FOR USE BY FARMERS GROUPS' PEER EDUCATORS



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# Nutrition Dialogue Guide Cards For use by Farmers Groups' Peer Educators

## How to use the dialogue guide cards

- These cards are designed to help Farmers Groups' Peer Educators to communicate effectively on nutrition-related topics with the Farmers Groups' Members during the monthly or quarterly group meetings
- Since the farmers' group meets to discuss farming-related issues, the peer educator can request the group to dedicate about 15 to 20 minutes to discuss key nutrition messages. The peer educator can then select the appropriate dialogue card to use for this discussion.
- The side of the card with illustrations or pictures is intended to be viewed by the farmers group's members, while the other side with text is to be viewed by the peer educator
- The peer educator displays the side with the illustrations or picture to the audience, then he/she asks the probing questions. The peer educator should use the key nutrition actions indicated in the card to reinforce or correct the responses given by the audience
- The peer educator should use the facilitator's technique of using repetition of nutrition themes. The cards may have repeated nutrition messages which help in adult learning

## The nutrition topics covered in the dialogue guide cards include:

**Card 1:** The importance of good dietary practice to health and general well being

**Card 2:** Understanding key dietary practices – diet diversity, food frequency and amounts

**Card 3:** Enrich your food for added strength and immunity

**Card 4:** Enhancing quality of food through appropriate food preparation and cooking techniques

**Card 5:** Dietary practices that fight infections and diseases

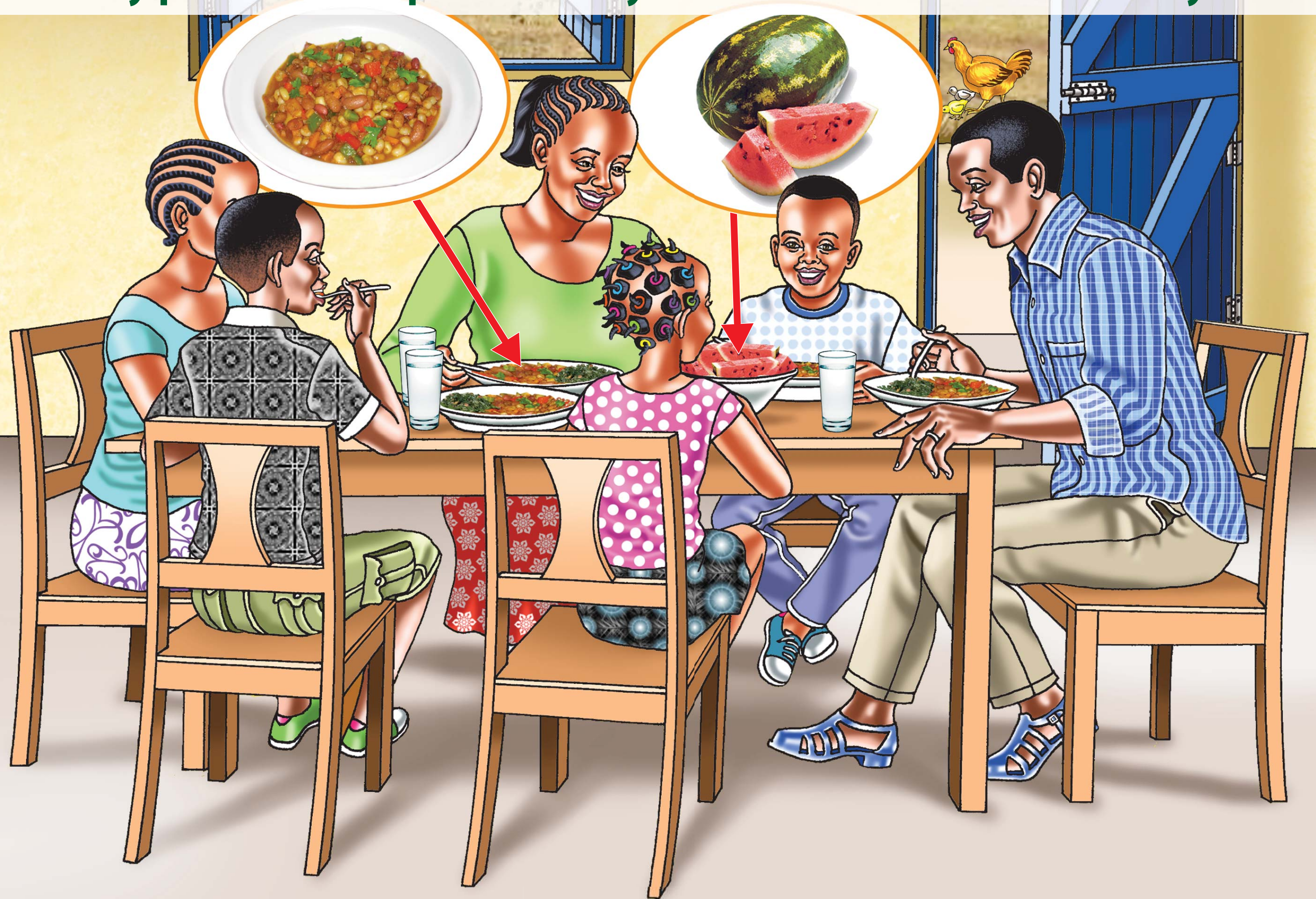
**Card 6:** Appropriate Complementary feeding for your child who is older than 6 months

**Card 7:** What is the truth about local food myths and taboos?

**Card 8:** Key nutrition practices for you and your family.



# Good dietary practice is important for your health and the health of your family





## Key Message:

# Good dietary practice is important for your health and the health of your family

## Probing questions for farmers group's peer educator

- Ask the group to describe what they see in the picture;
- Build on the group's response and ask them what they understand by good dietary practices.

Use the explanation below to guide the discussion:

- Good dietary practices are eating habits that include intake of various types of foods from several food groups, in the right amounts, at the right time and intervals. The food groups include: whole grain and cereals, roots and tubers, pulses and legumes, green leafy vegetables, nuts and seeds, milk and milk products, fresh fruits, meat and meat products.
- Explain how good dietary practices affect the body's nutrition and health status.

Use the explanation below to guide the discussion:

- Eating well ensures that the food you eat is used up by the body to help it to grow optimally, function properly and to give you the needed energy to work and play. The nutrients in the food also help the body to fight off infections such as common colds and diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure
- Share key actions that group members should take to ensure they had good dietary practices.

## Key Nutrition Actions

- Every time you eat, ensure the meal has a variety of foods in it. The higher the variety of foods you eat in a day, the more nutrients you will benefit from to help your body to function optimally
- Eat at least three main meals in a day. If you can afford to, also add 2 small healthy snacks in between your main meals (can be a fruit or a handful of melon seeds)
- Drink plenty of water at least one hour before or one hour after your meals. The water will help in the digestion of the food you eat
- Eat plenty of brightly coloured fruits and vegetables [orange, red and green]. They will help you to fight off infections and diseases



Eating well is eating a variety of foods frequently and in the right amounts and combinations





## Key Message:

# Eating well is eating a variety of foods frequently and in the right amounts and combinations

## Probing questions for farmers group's peer educator

- Ask a volunteer within the group to describe what her/his family eats in a typical meal. Ask the other group members to comment about the variety of foods in that meal and to discuss what the meal should include to make it wholesome and nutritious
- Display the picture in the card and ask the group members to describe what they see in the picture;
- Build on the group's response and ask them to identify locally available foods for each of the food groups represented.

Use the food groups below to guide the discussion:

Whole grain and cereals (e.g. maize, sorghum, finger millet, rice, wheat), roots and tubers (e.g. cassava, irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams, arrow roots), legumes (e.g. cowpeas, lentils, pigeon peas, beans, green grams, dolich lab lab, soya beans), vegetables (e.g. cowpeas leaves, pumpkin leaves, amaranthus), nuts and seeds (e.g. pumpkin seeds, melon seeds, pawpaw seeds), milk and milk products, fresh fruits (e.g. water melon, mangoes, pawpaws, tangerines, oranges, lemons), meat and meat products (e.g. indigenous chicken, eggs).

- Each of the food groups has nutrients that help the body to perform specific critical functions.
  - Whole grain and cereals: source of energy that helps us carry out our daily activities
  - Roots and tubers: source of energy to the body
  - Legumes and nuts: help the body to grow and develop optimally
  - Fruits: boosts our immunity to prevent infections and diseases; source of energy because they have natural sugars; and improves digestion of food
  - Vegetables: boosts our immunity to prevent infections and diseases; improves digestion of food
  - Milk and milk products: help the body to grow and develop optimally; strengthen the bones
  - Meat and meat products: help the body to grow and develop optimally
- Discuss with the group how many times one should eat in a day, and why it is important to eat at least 3 main meals in a day.

Use the phrase below to summarize the discussion:

  - It is important that each of your meals contains a variety of food from different food groups, so that you benefit from the nutrients provided by each of these foods. It is equally important to have at least 3 main meals in a day so that you can get sufficient amounts of nutrients to support your bodily functions and to have sufficient energy for the day's activities. One should also add 1 to 2 snacks, that is, foods that are eaten between meals, and usually convenient or easy to prepare e.g. a fruit
  - The way in which you combine the foods that you eat is very critical as it determines how much of the nutrients in the food are absorbed by the body. You should understand how to mix foods to get the most value out of them. For example, you should eat tangerines/oranges/lemons soon after eating dark green leafy vegetables since this will increase the body's absorption of the iron found in the vegetables. This will increase the body's strength and help prevent anemia.
- Share the key actions indicated below that group members should take to ensure they are eating well

## Key Nutrition Actions

- Ensure that your every meal has a variety of foods in it. The higher the variety of foods you eat in a day, the more nutrients you will benefit from to help your body to function optimally
- Eat at least three main meals in a day. If you can afford to, also add 2 small healthy snacks in between your main meals (can be a fruit or a handful of pumpkin seeds)
- Drink plenty of water at least one hour before or one hour after your meals. The water will help in the digestion of the food you eat
- Eat plenty of brightly coloured fruits and vegetables [orange, red and green]. They will help you to fight off infections and diseases
- Practice eating habits that will increase the body's absorption of nutrients from foods. Examples: Whenever possible, eat meat and meat products [like chicken, eggs] as they have good sources of nutrients such as iron; eat fermented foods such as fermented porridge and milk
- Avoid eating habits that reduce the body's absorption of nutrients from foods. Examples: Avoid drinking tea, coffee and cocoa together with meals – wait for at least 1 to 2 hours before drinking these liquids



# Enrich Food to make it more nutritious and beneficial to all family members





## Key Message:

# Enrich Food to make it more nutritious and beneficial to all family members

## Probing questions for farmers group's peer educator

- Display the picture in the card and ask the group members to describe what they see in the picture;
- Build on the group's response and introduce the topic of importance of enriching food. Ask volunteers in the group to explain why it is important to add cooking oil or fat to the maize meal porridge

Use the phrase below to explain the importance of enriching food

- You can enrich the food you normally eat by adding extra food ingredients to it. This makes the food more nutritious and beneficial to your body.
- Ask the group to describe OTHER ways of improving the nutrient quality of the food typically made at home
- Use the examples below to add to what the group has suggested in their responses to your question:

How to enrich locally-made food

- Add cooking oil, fat or margarine to maize meal or sorghum porridge [for extra energy for the body]
  - Add sugar or honey to maize meal or sorghum porridge [for extra energy for the body]
  - Add milk to maize meal or sorghum porridge [to increase protein and calcium]
  - Mix maize and sorghum flours to prepare nutritious porridge
  - Fry your food with cooking oil or fat to add the energy the food provides to the body
  - Add eggs to food while cooking
  - Add dried fruit to food after cooking, or eat as a healthy snack. Examples of dried fruits are raisins, plums, pears, dates, pawpaws, mangoes and peaches
  - Add roasted or cooked nuts and seeds to food after cooking. Examples of nuts are peanuts and cashewnuts. Examples of seeds are simsim, pawpaw seeds, and pumpkin seeds. You can grind the seeds and nuts before adding to cooked food [these are rich in protein and zinc]
  - Add milk cream to green vegetable and potatoes while cooking
- Share the key actions indicated below that group members should take to ensure they are enrich their meals

## Key Nutrition Actions

- Enrich all your meals by adding extra food ingredients [sugar, milk, eggs, roasted nuts, roasted or dried seeds, dried fruit, honey] that will increase the nutrient value of the food



# Improve the quality of your food through key food preparation and cooking techniques



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## Key Message:

# Improve the quality of your food through key food preparation and cooking techniques

## Probing questions for farmers group's peer educator

- Display the picture in the card and ask the group members to describe what they see in the picture;
- Build on the group's response and ask them why they think it is important to soak beans in water before cooking
- Introduce the topic of key food preparation techniques. Use the phrase below to explain the importance of focusing on food preparation methods
  - It is important to pay careful attention to how food is prepared before and during cooking. The appropriate food preparation methods help to preserve the nutrients in the foods, hence ensuring that once eaten, the foods provide all the nutrients found in the food without losing them in the process of preparation or cooking.
- Ask the group to describe key food preparation methods that help to preserve the nutrients in the food being cooked
- Use the examples in the key actions below to add to what the group has suggested in their responses to your question:

## Key Nutrition Actions

Preserve the quality of your food by considering the following food preparation and cooking methods:

- Always store cereals in a cool, dry place after harvesting
- Avoid removing the outer cover of maize because it destroys the nutrients found inside
- Completely dry cereals and legumes to prevent them from spoilage
- Boil sweet potatoes and irish potatoes with their skin to retain their nutrients
- Dry, mill and cook cassava, yams and arrow roots as a thick porridge
- Soak dry legumes (beans, cowpeas, pigeon peas, etc.) overnight before cooking to increase availability of iron and to reduce stomach gas
- Avoid overcooking green leafy vegetables as it destroys key nutrients
- Wash all vegetables first before cutting them or plucking them to avoid loss of nutrients
- Sprouting and germination of legumes increases availability of nutrients
- Avoid exposing fruits to the sun so that the nutrients in them are not lost. Store the fruits in a cool, enclosed place
- Eat both the flesh and the seeds of the watermelon because the seeds are high in nutrients
- Wash fruits properly before eating them



# The food you eat determines your health and nutritional status





## Key Message:

# The food you eat determines your health and nutritional status

## Probing questions for farmers group's peer educator

- Display the picture in the card and ask the group members to describe what they see in the picture;
- Build on the group's response and ask them what reasons may have caused the boy to look malnourished and sickly. Ask the group what may have contributed to the other boy's healthy looking image.

Use the phrase below to summarize the meaning of the picture in the card

- Eating well (diversified diet, eaten frequently and in the right amounts and combinations) helps the body to have a strong immune system that helps it to fight infections (such as coughs and colds) and diseases (such as high blood pressure and diabetes).
  - The boy who looks weak, sick and malnourished has mainly been eating a staple dish of maize meal with little else for a long time and consequently, his body has weakened over time, and he has become an easy target for many infections which have further weakened him.
  - The other boy who looks healthy has a diet which looks varied and full of nutrients that help him to fight off common infections and illnesses.
  - It is important to note that other factors that contribute to good health include: access to safe drinking water, access to a latrine, good hygiene practices such as washing of hands at critical times and access to proper health care
- Ask the group to list types of locally available foods that help to improve the body's immunity against infections and diseases. Use the list below to add to the group's responses to your question

Locally available foods that increase your body's immunity to infections and disease

- Fruits: Examples – watermelon, pawpaw, lemon, tangerine, mango, orange
  - Vegetables: Examples – cowpeas leaves, pumpkin leaves, amaranthus, tomatoes
- Ask the group to describe eating habits that contribute to diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes and heart diseases. Use the list below to add to the group's response to your question

Eating habits that contribute to high blood pressure, diabetes and heart diseases:

- High intake of sugary foods e.g. sweets, cakes, biscuits mandazi, etc
  - High intake of sugar in beverages such as porridge, tea, fermented milk
  - High intake of carbonated soft drinks that are high in sugar content e.g. sodas, concentrated juices, etc
  - High intake of salty foods or cooking food with excess salt.
  - High intake of tea and coffee
  - High intake of food that has been fried in a lot of cooking oil or fat
  - Low intake of whole cereals (maize, sorghum, wheat flours whose outer skins have not been removed through posho milling)
  - Use of fats instead of oils for cooking
- Share the key actions indicated below that group members should take to build their body's immunity through dietary habits

## Key Nutrition Actions

- To build your body's immunity against infections and diseases, eat a diversified diet in the right amounts, right frequency and right combinations
- Practice healthy eating habits to prevent chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes and heart diseases which are becoming increasingly common among Kenyans
- Eat at least 2 to 3 servings of brightly coloured and fresh fruits and vegetables which are the best sources of nutrients that help you to fight off infections



# Appropriate Complementary Feeding Practices for Children Above 6 Months Old





## Key Message:

# Appropriate Complementary Feeding Practices for Children Above 6 Months Old

## Probing questions for farmers group's peer educator

- Display the picture in the card and ask the group members to describe what they see in the picture;
- Build on the group's response and introduce the topic of complementary feeding for a child from 6 months and above. Use the phrases below to explain what complementary feeding is and why it is important for the child.
  - When a child has reached 6 months of age, start giving him/her other types of foods while you continue breastfeeding. Continue breastfeeding the child until they reach 2 years of age or more
  - After 6 months of age, children need other types of foods together with breastmilk so that they can continue to grow well. Different types of food help your child in many different ways. Children who do not eat well during this critical time may end up with poor health and low cognitive development throughout their lives.
  - Give your children a variety of foods everyday. These foods may be cooked differently depending on the child's needs.
  - Beans, peas, meat, chicken and eggs help to build a child's body
  - Cooked maize-meal [ugali], maize, potatoes and cooked green bananas provide your child with strength
  - Fruits, vegetables – for example, green leafy vegetables, carrots, pumpkin, oranges, mangoes and pawpaws help to protect your child against diseases and infections
- Describe the amounts of food and frequency of complementary feeding that should be followed at different ages of the child. Use the section below for this explanation:

Follow the food portions that have been recommended below:

  - After 6 months: Feed your child food two times in a day. Give two or three tablespoons every feeding time.
  - When the child is 7-8 months old: Feed your child three times in a day. The quantity of the food should be half a cup every feeding time.
  - When the child is 9-11 months old: Feed your child three times in a day. The quantity of the food should be  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a cup during every feeding time. Add a healthy snack which should be given twice in a day, in between the main feeding times.
  - When the child is 12-24 months old: Feed your child three times in a day. The quantity of the food should be one full cup for each meal. Add a healthy snack which should be given twice in a day, in between the main feeding times.
- Ask the group to identify other important factors to consider when doing complementary feeding. Build on the group's responses by using the section below to describe these key factors.

Factors to consider when doing complementary feeding of children

  - Separate your child's spoon and plate from the rest of the other family members, to ensure they are only used by the child. Prepare porridge that is thick enough and that does not drip too easily from the spoon. Every time you feed the child porridge, add other varieties of foods to enrich the meal.
  - Encourage your child to eat, but do not force them to eat. Give them your full attention, be patient and allow them adequate time to feed each meal.
  - Wash your hands with clean water and soap at critical times including: before preparing or cooking food, before breastfeeding and after cleaning the child after defecating.
  - Thoroughly wash all the bowls, cups, spoons and other dishes using clean water and soap
  - Store cooked food in a container that is covered and ensure the food is eaten within one after cooking. Ensure cooked food that has cooled after storage, is thoroughly heated before eating.
- Share the key actions indicated below that group members should take when doing complementary feeding

## Key Nutrition Actions

- After 6 months of a child's life, give them other types of foods every day, together with breast-milk
- As your child is growing beyond 6 months, continue to add the quantity and variety of food that you are giving
- Wash your hands with clean water and soap at critical times and also thoroughly wash all dishes for eating and cooking
- Ensure appropriate storage of cooked food in a clean and covered container
- Take your child to the nearest health clinic to receive vitamin A supplements every 6 months, and full immunization to ensure they have good health and are growing well.



# The truth about local food myths and taboos



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## Key Message:

# The truth about local food myths and taboos

### Probing questions for farmers group's peer educator

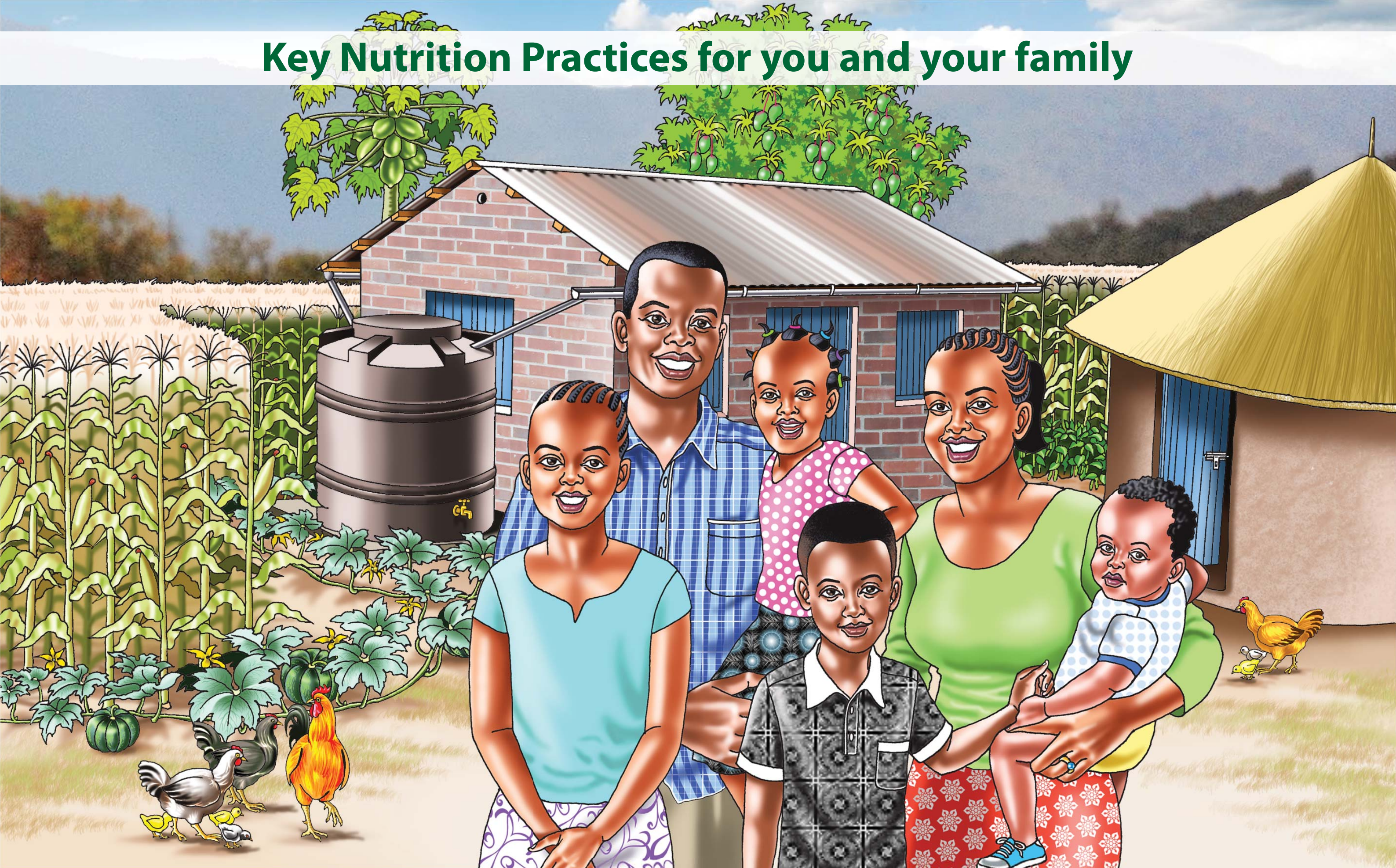
- Ask the group whether there are any foods that cannot be eaten by different community members. Ask them to identify these foods and give reasons why particular community members are not allowed to eat these foods. (Example of a food taboo in other communities: Eggs should not be eaten by pregnant women because it will make the baby's head too large)
- Ask the group to also identify any eating practices that are unique to the community. Ask them to discuss whether these practices affect the nutrition and health status of the community members. (Example of a practice: Women should be the last to eat in the family, while men eat the largest and best portions of the food).
- Discuss the benefits and disadvantages of these food taboos and misunderstandings
- Build on the group's discussions by explaining why it is important to dispel these food taboos and myths, especially when they can lead to poor nutrition and health status of the affected community members. Use the phrase below to summarize the key points of the discussion.
- Food taboos are foods and drinks which people abstain from consuming for religious, cultural beliefs or other reasons that are well known to them.
- Every community has its own food taboos and myths. Some of these food taboos and myths have no scientific justification and can result in the worsening of the health and nutrition status of the community members who are targeted by these myths and taboos. In most instances, women and children are the most affected by these taboos, yet they are the ones who are the most vulnerable to malnutrition and ill-health, especially at different stages of their lives, for example, during pregnancy and breastfeeding stages for the women; and during the first five years of a child's life. During these times, they need to eat well, meaning, they should eat a diversified diet [with no limitation on the types of food eaten], frequently [3 main meals with 2 snacks], in the correct amounts and in the right combinations.
- Every type of food has its own great value because each food contains useful nutrients needed to make the body function well.
- Share the key actions indicated below that group members should take regarding the community's food taboos and myths

### Key Nutrition Actions

- Find out the truth about a particular food taboo and myth to ensure it does not affect your health and that of your family
- Avoid practicing food taboos that may adversely affect community members, particularly children under 5 years and pregnant/breastfeeding mothers



# Key Nutrition Practices for you and your family



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## Key Message:

# Key Nutrition Practices for you and your family

## Probing questions for farmers group's peer educator

- Ask the group to identify the key nutrition practices that are important to ensure the wellbeing of the entire family. Use the list below to summarize these practices

## Key Nutrition Actions

- Every time you eat, ensure the meal has a variety of foods in it. The higher the variety of foods you eat in a day, the more nutrients you will benefit from to help your body to function optimally
- Eat at least three main meals in a day. If you can afford to, also add 2 small healthy snacks in between your main meals (can be a fruit or a handful of melon seeds)
- Drink plenty of water at least one hour before or one hour after your meals. The water will help in the digestion of the food you eat
- Eat plenty of brightly coloured and fresh fruits and vegetables [orange, red and green], which are the best sources of nutrients that help you to fight off infections and diseases
- Practice eating habits that will increase the body's absorption of nutrients from foods. Examples: Whenever possible, eat meat and meat products [like chicken, eggs] as they have good sources of nutrients such as iron; eat fermented foods such as fermented porridge and milk
- Avoid eating habits that reduce the body's absorption of nutrients from foods. Examples: Avoid drinking tea, coffee and cocoa together with meals – wait for at least 1 to 2 hours before drinking these liquids
- Enrich all your meals by adding extra food ingredients that will increase the nutrient value of the food
- Preserve the quality of your food by considering key food preparation and cooking methods such as: avoid overcooking green vegetables, soak your beans and peas in water over night and store fruits in a cool airy place
- To build your body's immunity against infections and diseases, eat a diversified diet in the right amounts, right frequency and right combinations
- Practice healthy eating habits such as reduced intake of sugar, salt and fats, to prevent chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes and heart diseases which are becoming increasingly common among Kenyans
- Ensure appropriate storage of cooked food in a clean and covered container
- Take your child to the nearest health clinic to receive vitamin A supplements every 6 months, and full immunization to ensure they have good health and are growing well
- Find out the truth about a particular food taboo and myth that may adversely affect community members, particularly children and pregnant/breastfeeding mothers